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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000056

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/W, INR/AA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON VIOLENCE IN JOS

REF: A. ABUJA 0044
[1](#)B. 08 ABUJA 2494 AND PREVIOUS
[1](#)C. 08 ABUJA 2328

Classified By: Political Counselor James McAnulty
for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) Violence continued for a fourth day in Jos, but at a reduced level, at least for now, according to Mission contacts and press reports. After widespread violence overnight, contacts report relative calm the morning of January 20, punctuated by periodic bursts of gunfire. Vice President Jonathan ordered additional police and military forces to deploy to Jos on January 19, and authorities dispatched helicopters to look for trouble spots. Heavy smoke reportedly hovered over the city as structures burned themselves out. The governor's 24-hour curfew continues, with all shops, schools, and offices closed. There are no reported incidents involving American citizens. END SUMMARY.

RELATIVE CALM AFTER VIOLENT NIGHT

[1](#)2. (SBU) Gabriel Makan, an aide to former Plateau Governor Chief Joshua Dariye, told us that relative calm had returned to Jos the morning of January 20. He confirmed the presence of additional security forces and reports of reduced but sporadic gunfire. A U.S. citizen farm owner reported that assailants targeted the village of Kuru, which housed Muslim farm workers and their families. The attackers rounded up, shot, and killed residents or burned them in their homes. According to this contact, both Muslim and Christian farm workers provided similar accounts of this violence. Other first-hand accounts reported attacks on passengers along the Jos-Abuja Road near Riyom and Bukuru. The American Corner Director in Jos and LES relatives in the area stated that the violence this time has spread to areas that escaped previous bouts of communal violence.

VICE PRESIDENT ORDERS OUT POLICE AND MILITARY

[1](#)3. (SBU) National Security Advisor General Abdullahi Muktar

told the media January 19 that the federal government had ordered soldiers to Jos to quell the violence, and DATT and RAO contacts reported on the morning of January 20 that they "now everything is under control." Media reports indicate that arrests have topped 100. After a meeting with Vice President Jonathan, Inspector General of Police Ogbonna Onovo and Director-General of the State Security Services (SSS) Afakriya Gadzama flew to Jos by helicopter January 19 to direct police operations.

¶4. (SBU) However, Mission contacts remain unconvinced that the situation is under control. Some say the military response has been inadequate, and estimate that the death toll may be already at 500 and rising. There are recurring reports of assailants wearing the uniforms of police and military personnel.

¶5. (SBU) Officials in several Northern states instituted measures to prevent violence from spreading to their localities. Authorities in Bauchi and Kaduna, where tensions have apparently risen, directed security forces to "deal decisively" with those seeking conflict. Authorities also strengthened border controls between Bauchi and Plateau States to attempt to prevent the flow of weapons. Delta QStates to attempt to prevent the flow of weapons. Delta State Governor Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan sent three buses to Plateau to attempt to evacuate Delta "indigenes." Religious leaders, National Assembly members, and local governments have condemned the violence and called for the restoration of order and peace.

¶6. (SBU) The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

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does not yet have accurate statistics of deaths or injuries, with their local agents just arriving in Jos the morning of January 20. The Nigeria Police Force has estimated the ranks of the internally displaced at 3,000 while some press accounts put the figure as high as 10,000. Many Jos residents lack food and water, as they cannot safely leave their homes and a 24-hour curfew remains in effect, with businesses, shops, and offices closed.

NO REPORT OF AMCIT INCIDENTS

¶7. (SBU) The Mission warden register lists 285 U.S. citizens in Jos and its suburbs, but the actual number of local AmCits may be about 500. Many are long-term residents associated with the Hill Crest missionary school, about 100 of whom opted to evacuate the area during the November 2008 violence.

Like 2008, there are no reports of incidents thus far involving American citizens. Telecommunication links to Jos are erratic but text messages appear to be getting through. Post will continue its outreach efforts to Jos AmCits and monitor their situation closely.

COMMENT

¶8. (C) It is unclear if the GON has managed to restore order in Jos, if the violence is in a lull, or if the violence is poised to spread elsewhere. Whereas the November 2008 rioting that claimed 400 lives was confined to one part of Jos and was fueled and probably triggered by political opportunists, the current violence appears to have combusted from a relatively minor incident) neighborhood residents reacting forcefully to the attempt of an "outsider" to rebuild his home in their area) and the death toll may already to be higher. Given the spread of the violence this time, the physical destruction in Jos is also likely greater now. Post EAC meeting on January 20 (septel) agreed to put the greater Jos area off limits until further notice for USG personnel and to draft a warden message advising American

citizens to exercise extreme caution.
SANDERS